

Message Text

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COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 XMB-02 OPIC-03

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R 260830Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2547

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

USEC BRUSSELS 1727

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 5164

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ECON, SP, PO, MO

SUBJ: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS DURING SECOND QUARTER

REF: MADRID 2659

SUMMARY: TRADITIONAL SUMMER VACATION PERIOD BEGINNING
JULY 18 FOUND SPAIN BADLY IN NEED OF REST PERIOD AFTER
QUARTER IN WHICH INTERNAL AND EXTEERNAL TENSIONS ROSE AND
PROGRAM OF GRADUAL LIBERALIZATION SLOWED IN FACE OF OBSTACLES
FROM THE RIGHT. STRENGTH OF RIGHT WAS SYMBOLIZED BY MOST
ACTIVE PERIOD OF FRANCO'S INVOLVEMENT IN GOVT AND PUBLIC
AFFAIRS SINCE ILLNESS ONE YEAR AGO. NOTWITHSTANDING PUBLIC
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RECOMMENDATIONS BY SOME POLITICIANS AND COMMENTATORS THAT FRANCO

TURN OVER REINS OF GOVT TO JUAN CARLOS, THIS POSSIBILITY APPEARS REMOTE AS LONG AS HE RETAINS HIS PRESENT HEALTH AND, SECONDLY, AS LONG AS SPAIN FACES SUCH CRITICAL ISSUES AS DECOLONIZATION OF SAHARA AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U.S. INTERNAL IMPACT OF SPAIN'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS HAS TENDED TO REINFORCE TENDENCY TO PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY WITH LIBERALIZATION WITH EMPHASIS ON LAW AND ORDER.

OTHERWISE IN FOREIGN RELATIONS NATO'S REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH CONTRIBUTION TO WESTERN DEFENSE AND STALEMATE IN SPAIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO WESTERN DEFENSE AND STALEMATE IN SPAIN'S NEGOTIATIONS FOR ASSOCIATION WITH EC, HAVE INTENSIFIED SPAIN'S FRUSTRATION. PRIME MINISTER ARIAS HAS REITERATED VIEW THAT MADRID WOULD NOT ADJUST ITS INSTITUTIONS SIMPLY IN ORDER TO PLEASE EUROPEANS FOR PURPOSE OF ACCESS TO EUROPEAN ORGANIZATIONS. MEANWHILE MILITARY HAS REITERATED ITS COMMITMENT TO FUNDAMENTAL LAWS AND JUAN CARLOS' SUCCESSION, BUT JUAN CARLOS' FATHER, DON JUAN, WEAKENED IMAGE OF MONARCHY BY STATEMENTS QUESTIONING LEGITIMACY OF FRANCO REGIME AND MONARCHICAL SYSTEM.

THERE WAS NO PROGRESS IN CHURCH/STATE RELATIONS AND CHURCH, ALONG WITH PRESS, LABOR AND REGIONAL GROUPS REMAINED KEY PRESSURE GROUPS FOR CHANGE. WHILE GOVT TOOK SOMEWHAT HARDER LINE TOWARDS PRESS, IT FINALLY APPEARED TO BEGIN TO SEEK SOLUTION TO BASQUE PROBLEM BY POLITICAL MEANS RATHER THAN BY POLICE MEANS ALONE. GOS RECOGNIZED LEGAL STRIKES FOR FIRST TIME IN NEW STATUTE, WHILE CLANDESTINE LABOR ORGANIZATIONS WERE NOTABLY UNSUCCESSFUL IN EFFORTS TO HOLD POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED GENERAL STRIKES, BUT WERE QUITE SUCCESSFUL IN FREER-THAN-USUAL SHOP STEWARD ELECTIONS. GOVT HAS NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL YET IN MOBILIZING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS ALTHOUGH FIVE HAVE RECEIVED INITIAL LEGAL AUTHORIZATION. CLANDESTINE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION GROUPS FINALLY WORKED OUT COALITION (PLATAFORMA DE CONVERGENCIA DEMOCRATICA) TO RIVAL COMMUNIST-SPONSORED "JUNTA DEMOCRATICA." REAL ECONOMIC GROWTH (GNP) DECLINED TO ABOUT TWO PERCENT ANNUALLY AND UNEMPLOYMENT IS RUNNING ABOUT FOUR PERCENT. INFLATION, CURRENTLY AT ANNUAL RATE OF 17 PERCENT (ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL STATISTICS) APPEARS TO BE LEVELING OFF, BUT GROWING TRADE AND PAYMENTS DEFICIT HAS

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COST A DECLINE IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES OF \$400 MILLION SO FAR THIS YEAR TO ABOUT \$5.6 BILLION. END SUMMARY

1. SLOWER PACDE OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. ARIAS RECOMMITTED HIMSELF TO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN SECOND MAJOR SPEECH TO CORTES JUNE 24, WHICH WAS, HOWEVER, INTERPRETED AS MORE AUTHORITARIAN AND CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS THAN FIRST SPEECH OF FEB 12, 1974. IT CONFIRMED GENERAL IMPRESSION THAT

RIGHT WING FORCES OPPOSED TO CHANGE HAD FOR THE MOMENT REASSERTED THEMSELVES AND WERE INFLUENCING POLICIES OF ARIAS' GOVT. ARIAS NEVERTHELESS ANNOUNCED THAT POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS, STILL ONLY ELEMENT OF ORIGINAL PROGRAM WHICH IS MOVING AHEAD (ALBEIT AT A SNAIL'S PACE), WOULD BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN FALL ELECTIONS ON BASIS OF REGULATIONS AND OTHER STATUTORY CHANGES TO BE ADOPTED BY END OF AUGUST. MEANWHILE, CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN NATIONAL MOVEMENT, SUPPORTED BY PRESTIGIOUS FORMER LEADERS, HAVE MOVED RAPIDLY TO SET UP POLITICAL ASSOCIATION (UNION DEL PUEBLO) WITH DE FACTO ORGANIZATIONAL BACKING OF MOVEMENT. AS CONSEQUENCE OF ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF SECGEN OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT, FORMER SECGEN JOSE SOLIS RUIZ, KEY FIGURE IN NEW POLITICAL ASSOCIATION, TOOK OVER AS NEW SECGEN IN JUNE. SECOND MAJOR POLITICAL ASSOCIATION, ORGANIZED BY SILVA MUNOZ (UNION DEMOCRATICA ESPANOLA), HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL AWAIT PUBLICATION OF REGULATIONS ON ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION BEFORE FINALIZING ITS ORGANIZATIONAL BASIS. THIRD POLITICAL ASSOCIATION, ORGANIZED BY CANTARERO DEL CASTILLO (REFORMA SOCIAL), HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN ENCOUNTERING PUBLIC INDIFFERENCE AND UNWILLINGNESS TO SIGN UP. ARIAS' STATEMENT THAT "SOCIALIZERS" AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS COULD JOIN IN GOVT-SPONSORED PROGRAM OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS HAVE FALLEN ON DEAF EARS. THESE OPPOSITION GROUPS FINALLY CONSTITUTED JUNE 11 BROAD COALITION KNOWN AS "PLATAFORMA DE CONVERGENCIA DEMOCRATICA" TO RIVAL COMMUNIST-DOMINATED "JUNTA DEMOCRATICA." TRADITIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY (PSOE) IS BACKBONE OF NEW GROUPING WHICH INCLUDES THREE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, CARLISTS, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, REGIONAL GROUPS, AND SEVERAL GROUPS TO LEFT OF COMMUNIST PARTY. "JUNTA DEMOCRATICA" LEADERS WERE RECEIVED DURING MEXICAN VISIT BY PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA WHILE U.S. CONGRESSMEN RECEIVED NON-COMMUNIST LEADERS IN "JUNTA" AND "PLATAFORMA" SEEK SAME GOAL OF DRAWING TOGETHER ALL

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OPPOSITION GROUPS; SOME ELEMENTS OF "PLATAFORMA" ARE WILLING TO INCLUDE PCE PROVIDING LATTER ABANDONS "JUNTA". FOLLOWING FAILURE IN GOVT/FRAGA IRIBARNE DIALOGUE IN FEBRUARY ABOUT ESTABLISHMENT OF RIGHT-CENTER OR CENTER POLITICAL ASSOCIATION, FRAGA AND HIS SUPPORTERS, AS WELL AS OTHER FORMER COLLABORATORS OF REGIME, HAVE MOVED FURTHER AWAY FROM GOVT-SPONSORED PROGRAM BY SETTING UP BUSINESS "CORPORATION" TO BE USED FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. GOVT HAS FAILED TO INVOLVE SOME HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT SECTORS OF PRESENT-DAY SPANISH OPINION IN ITS POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS SCHEME.

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R 260830Z JUL 75

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2. FRANCO'S MORE ACTIVE ROLE. FRANCO'S RETURN TO A MODERATELY HEAVY SCHEDULE, PARTICULARLY NOTICEABLE IN LAST QUARTER, HAS ACTED LIKE A DAMPER ON ARIAS NAVARRO'S ORIGINAL PROGRAM TO LIBERALIZE REGIME. ON FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF TQS FIRST MAJOR ILLNESS, CAUDILLO GIVES SIGNS OF HAVING COMPLETELY RECOVERED, (ALTHOUGH HE IS A YEAR OLDER AND DOES NOT DO ALL THAT HE DID BEFORE), AND OF DESIRING TO ASSERT HIS LEADERSHIP. SOME PROMINENT POLITICIANS IN OR CLOSE TO ESTABLISHMENT HAVE PUBLICLY URGED FRANCO TO STEP DOWN FOR GOOD OF COUNTRY TO PREPARE WAY FOR SMOOTHEST TRANSITION POSSIBLE. REPORTEDLY SOME TOP MILITARY LEADERS SHARE THIS VIEW. OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS AND COMMENTATORS, WHOSE VIEWS HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED BY AT LEAST ONE PUBLIC POLL, HAVE ARGUED THAT PRINCE
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JUNA CARLOS IS EMINENTLY PREPARED TO TAKE OVER AS HEAD OF STATE. JUAN CARLOS CONTINUED TO NURTURE HIS RELATIONS WITH MILITARY BY ATTENDANCE AT MILITARY FUNCTIONS AND GARNERED ESTEEM FOR HIS SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO FINLAND. PRINCE'S FATHER, DON JUAN, HOWEVER, DAMAGED IMAGE OF MONARCHY BY PUBLIC STATEMENT QUESTIONING LEGITIMACY OF FRANCO REGIME AND CAUDILLO'S MONARCHICAL SOLUTION FOR SPAIN. PRINCE'S EMBARRASSMENT WAS COMPUDED BY SUBSEQUENT GOVT ACTION BANNING DON JUAN FROM RETURN TO SPAIN.

3. INTERNAL ORDER. GOVT IMPOSED STATE OF EXCEPTION ON TWO BASQUE PROVINCES APRIL 26 FOLLOWING RECRUDESCENCE OF TERRORISM. EFFECT WAS STIMULATION OF MORE TERRORISM WHICH IN TURN ENGENDERED COUNTER-TERRORISM BY EXTREME RIGHTIST GROUPS, ALLEGEDLY LINKED TO POLICE. COUNTER-TERRORISM SPREAD FOR FIRST TIME TO BASQUE PROVINCES IN FRANCE. BY END OF QUARTER, HOWEVER, THERE WAS DECLINE OF VIOLENCE AND GOVT HINTED THAT IT MIGHT ALLOW STATE OF EXCEPTION TO LAPSE JULY 25. GOS HAD ALREADY ANNOUNCED IN MAY THAT REGIONAL LANGUAGES (BASQUE, CATALAN, AND GALICIAN) WOULD BE ALLOWED TO BE TAUGHT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS. IN JUNE CIVIL GOVERNOR OF GUIPUZCOA PROVINCE HINTED THAT GOVT WAS STUDYING POSSIBILITY OF REVOKING 1937 LAW DENYING SPECIAL PRIVILEGES TO TWO BASQUE PROVINCES IN FISCAL AND OTHER MATTERS. FIRST VICE PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR GARCIA HERNANDEZ", HAS MEANWHILE HELD PERIODIC MEETINGS WITH BASQUE PARLIAMENTARY REPS WHO HAVE PROPOSED LEGISLATION IN THIS SENSE. THESE DEVELOPMENTS APPEAR TO INDICATE GOVT'S INTENTION TO FOCUS MORE ON POLITICAL SOLUTION.

4. LABOR. GOS ISSUED DECREE LAW IN MAY RECOGNIZING FOR FIRST TIME MODIFIED, BUT HIGHLY CIRCUMSCRIBED, RIGHT TO STRIKE. THOUGH STRIKE ACTIVITY HAS CONTINUED SPORADICALLY IN INTERVENING PERIOD, THERE HAVE BEEN NO LEGAL STRIKES UNDER NEW DECREE LAW. GOS ALSO MODIFIED 1971 DECREE TO PERMIT RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY FOR WORKERS AT WORK PLACE FOR LEGITIMATE LABOR-RELATED MOTIVES. EIGHTY-FIVE PERCENT OF WORKERS PARTICIPATED IN QUADRENNIAL SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION SHOP STEWARD ELECTIONS IN JUNE. ACCORDING TO AVAILABLE INFO, ONLY ONE-QUARTER OF SHOP STEWARDS WERE RE-ELECTED; OF REMAINDER, THERE ARE WIDE-RANGING ESTIMATES THAT 5-25 PERCENT ARE MEMBERS

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OF CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS INCLUDING COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSIONS. THESE ELECTIONS WILL BE FOLLOWED IN FALL BY ELECTIONS AT LOCAL, PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS. MAINLY GOVT-APPROVED CANDIDATES ARE EXPECTED TO BE ELECTED BECAUSE OF CLOSER GOVT SCRUTINY AND CONTROL.

5. STALEMATE IN CHURCH/STATE RELATIONS. VISIT BY JUSTIC MINISTER TO ROME IN MAY SLIGHTLY IMPROVED ATMOSPHERICS BETWEEN VATICAN AND GOS BUT MADE NO PROGRESS TOWARD RESOLUTION OF MAIN ISSUES SUCH AS LONG-STALLED CONCORDAT NEGOTIATIONS. MEANWHILE GOS HAS CONTINUED HARD LINE WITH RESPECT TO WHAT IT CONSIDERS NON-RELIGIOUS SPHERE, E.G., BANNING OF CHURCH ASSEMBLIES, FINING AND ARRESTS OF PRIESTS ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES DEEMED PREJUDICIAL TO GOVT.

6. INTERACTION OF EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS. DETERIORATING SITUATION IN PORTUGAL HAS MADE IT HARDER FOR GOS TO MAINTAIN PASSIVE POSTURE (ALTHOUGH IT STILL IS DOING SO) WHILE WITHIN SPAIN RIGHT WING GROUPS HAVE REACTED BY BECOMING MORE ACTIVE AND VOCIFEROUS IN CHALLENGING PREMISE OF GRADUAL POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. DETERIORATION OF SPAIN'S POLITICAL POSITION IN SAHARA AND LOSS OR CAPTURE OF SOME SPANISH SOLDIERS GENERATED SOME PUBLIC DOUBTS ABOUT WISDOM OF GOS POLICY. MOROCCO'S CLAIMS TO CEUTA AND MELILLA HAVE FURTHER EXACERBATED BILATERAL RELATIONS AND INTRODUCED NEW FOCUS OF LOCAL VIOLENCE. LATE JUNE VISIT OF FONMIN CORTINA TO FRANCE WAS DEVOTED IN PART TO DISCUSSION OF BASQUE ISSUE, THE KEY IMPEDIMENT TO FRIENDLY SPANISH/FRENCH RELATIONS. NATO MINISTERS MEETING WAS REBUFF TO SPANISH PRIDE AND HAS REVERBERATED IN FFICIAL CIRCLES CAUSING RESENTMENT, FRUSTRATION AND RESURGENCE OF NATIONALISM. OFF AND ON TALKS IN BRUSSELS ABOUT RENEWAL OF SPAIN'S 1970 AGREEMENT WITH EC HAVE BEEN STALLED PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF ITALIAN RESERVATIONS ON ACCESS OF SPANISH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS (SHARED IN PART BY FRANCE). MEANWHILE VARIOUS OPPOSITION GROUPS IN SPAIN, PRINCIPALLY "JUNTA DEMOCRATICA", HAVE CULTIVATED EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION LEADERS.

7. PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT TO SPAIN. FOREIGN RELATIONS HIGHLIGHT OF QUARTER WAS PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT MAY 31-JUNE 1 TO MADRID. SUCCESS OF VISIT WAS IN CONTRAST TO CONFIDENTIAL

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DISAPPOINTMENTS OTHERWISE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FRUSTRATIONS AT HOME. VISIT HELPED SET STAGE FOR SPEEDING UP PACE OF BILATERAL TALKS ON RENEWAL OF AGREEEMTN FO FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION.

8. ECONOMIC TRENDS. GROWING BALANCE OF PAYMENTS EDFICIT CAUSED PRIMARILY BY INCREASING TRADE DEFICIT 15.5 PERCENT LARGER THAN SAME PERIOD 1974 IS GOVT'S PRIMARY ECONOMIC HEADACHE. FOREIGN RESERVES HAVE DROPPED \$400 MILLION SO FAR THIS YEAR TO \$5.6 BILLION. REAL GROWTH IN GNP HAS DECLINED TO ABOUT TWO PERCENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT IS RUNNING AT LEAST FOUR PERCENT. INFLATION RATE IS STILL HIGH (17 PERCENT) BUT SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN COMPARABLE RATE IN 1974 (17.9 PERCENT). GOS HAS

SOUGHT TO REDUCE RATE OF INFLATION AND CURTAIL BALANCE OF PAYMENTS
DEFICIT AT COST OF REDUCED LEVEL OF REAL ECONOMIC GROWTH AND
INCREASE IN UNEMPLOYMENT. AT END OF JUNE STOCK MARKETS REACHED
LOW FOR YEAR; ECONOMISTS BELIEVE THAT SLUMP IN SPANISH
INVESTMENT IS DELAYED REACTION TO FALL IN WORLD DEMAND WHEREAS
POLITICIANS BELIEVE DECLINE STEMS FROM POLITICAL UNCERTAINTIES.
IN BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS, SPAIN HAS INDICATED ITS DIS-
CONTENT WITH NOT BEING DESIGNATED BENEFICIARY OF GENERALIZED
TARIFF PREFERENCES UNDER 1974 TRADE ACT AND EXPRESSED CONCERN
ABOUT REPORTED RENEWED PRESSURES IN U.S. TO INCREASE COUNTER-
VAILING DUTIES ON SHOE IMPORTS FROM SPAIN.
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